

sylvania to Georgia, or *Gerardia paupercula* which is characterized by Pennell (see his map 114) as follows: "This species occurs wholly in glaciated territory, excepting for the occurrence in southeastern Pennsylvania . . . and . . . the unglaciated area of Wisconsin". He knew better than to call it a Coastal Plain type.

It is evident that too many botanists with limited outlook over the continent or the world have made the mistake of thinking in ecological rather than phytogeographic terms; to them any plant of sphagnum-bogs, peats and acid sands, as well as of salt marshes, would seem to be a plant of the Atlantic Coastal Plain. Until they study and understand the real Coastal Plain and its really distinctive flora such groundless but well-intended generalizations about them will be wholly misleading. Unfortunately, as I have been forced to write before, such work "contains so many assumptions that it must be classed as another addition to our too extensive mass of publications in which the tremendously interesting facts of distribution are replaced by vague and unsupported statements. That so many authors dealing with phytogeography are content to draw their deductions from inaccurate data is amazing, for, in this subject as in all others, as Byron long ago asserted, 'truth is always strange,—stranger than fiction'." Still more unfortunately, "errors once born never die but, on the contrary, by others not situated to know the facts are continually mistaken for the truth and consequently perpetuated," especially when they emanate from distinguished universities and academies. Erroneous matter thus formally published can not be blacked out!

NEMATODE INFECTION IN POA.—On the examination of plants of *Poa pratensis* from the matted mossy sward of an old hill pasture near the town of Antigonish, Nova Scotia, the variation in the size and appearance of the spikelets in the same panicle was found to be due to infection of some with nematode worms. The larger and greener spikelets had the grains filled with soft material composed of numerous eggs and larvae. The lemmas of such infected spikelets were 4.5–5.0 mm. long with 5 distinct and generally 2 or 4 additional less distinct nerves and were broad

enough to completely enclose the palea and the long (3.0–4.5 mm.), smooth, purple body representing the caryopsis. When all florets of the spikelet were infected the spikelet was 5.5–6.5 mm. long. The palea in some was normal, but in others it was represented by a 1- to several-nerved scale lacking in ciliation and, in all cases, quite free from the caryopsis. The glumes, particularly the second, were 3-nerved.

Normal spikelets are 3–5 mm. long with lemmas 3 mm. long, distinctly 3-nerved with 2 additional fainter intermediate nerves. The grain is plump, broad-elliptical, 2 mm. long, farinaceous, brownish and somewhat adherent to the palea.

In plants severely parasitized, the panicles are very much reduced in size with the few spikelets on stiff and short branches.

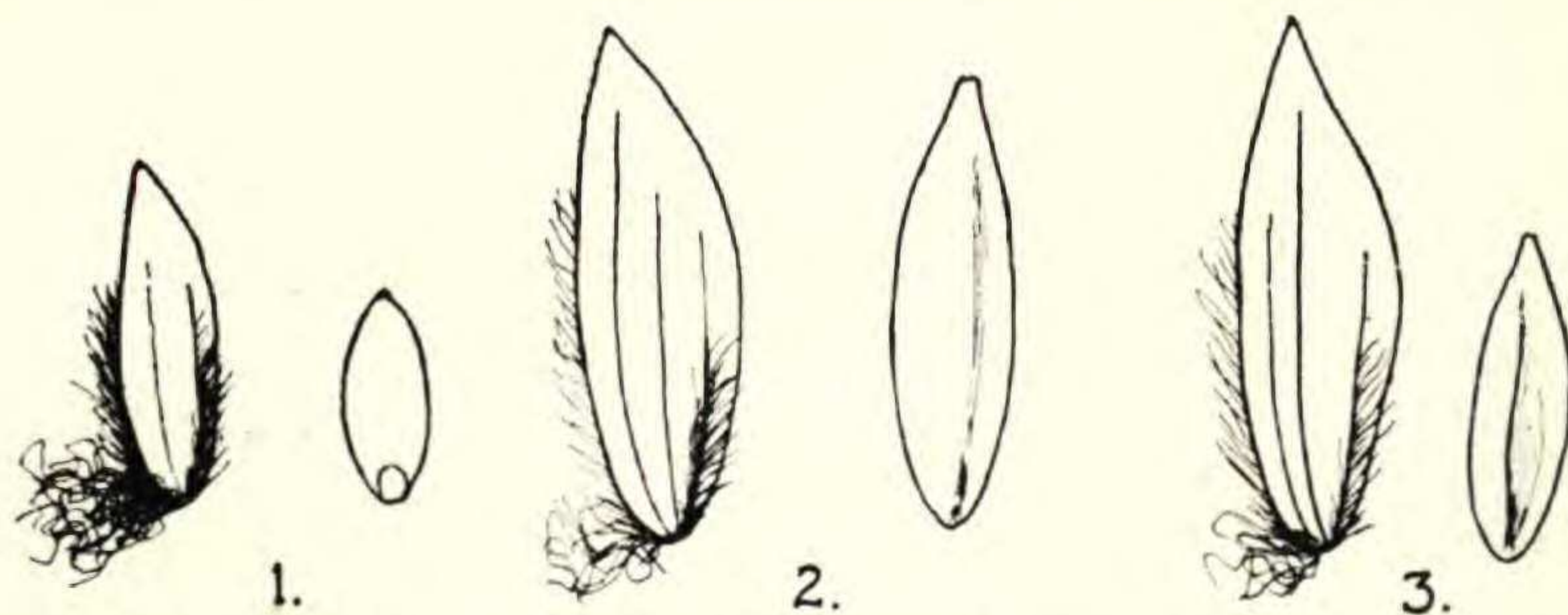


FIG. 1, lemma and caryopsis of normal spikelet of *P. PRATENSIS*. FIG. 2, lemma and caryopsis of infected spikelet from same panicle. FIG. 3, lemma and caryopsis of *P. COSTATA* (infected). All figures $\times 5$.

Such plants compare fairly well with specimens of *Poa costata* Schumacher collected by members of the Gray Herbarium Expedition in Nova Scotia in 1920 and 1921 (RHODORA **23**: 133, 231, 1921). A dissection of specimens in the National Herbarium of Canada, however, showed all to be infected with the nematodes and to possess morphological characters essentially the same as in infected spikelets of *P. pratensis*, as mentioned above. Although it cannot be said with certainty, it appears quite probable that these plants that have been passing as the rather rare *P. costata* of the Baltic, Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia may be, in reality, diseased states of the common *P. pratensis* or some other local species. A parallel case is frequently met with in *Agrostis tenuis* Sibth., the disease-modified plants having been given distinct specific or varietal names in the past (see Philipson, Jour. Bot. LXXIII: 65–74, 1935).—W. G. DORE, Dalhousie University, Halifax.